

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2004**

January 31, 2022

Mrs. Berit Reiss-Andersen  
Chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee  
The Norwegian Nobel Committee  
NO-0244 Oslo, Norway

Dear Chair Reiss-Andersen and Members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee:

We the undersigned members of the United States Congress, respectfully nominate Ms. Opal Lee to receive the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her work to establish Juneteenth as a national holiday and bring awareness to the contributions and struggles of African Americans in the United States, as well as her mission to create a more equitable society for humanity.

Ms. Lee has worked tirelessly for several decades to bring recognition to the date the last recognized enslaved people in Texas were freed, June 19, 1865, two and a half years after the proclamation was signed. This date is the effective date that freed all enslaved people in the United States. Enslaved individuals knew freedom had come in 1863, but because the Civil War was still raging there was no enforcement mechanism to make the slave owners release them. After the Union soldier arrived in Galveston, June 19 became a recognized day of celebration for African Americans in Texas and in 2021 it became a national holiday for all Americans.

As a child, Opal Lee's family home was attacked by a mob of white supremacists who vandalized and set the home on fire. This hate crime sparked a change in Ms. Lee and caused her to dedicate her life to teaching and advocating against white supremacy. The celebration of Juneteenth became for her not just a day to celebrate the freeing of enslaved people in Texas but the recognition of the need to uphold the freedoms that African Americans gained and a call to fight against for equality for all humans. Over the decades Ms. Lee organized many different efforts to have the holiday recognized such as in 2016 when she organized and participated in a walk from Fort Worth, Texas to Washington, DC to raise awareness of the importance of Juneteenth and the need to have the date designated as a federal holiday.

As an advocate, Ms. Lee's hopes to establish Juneteenth as a national holiday went far beyond just recognizing the day that the final enslaved people were notified of their freedom. It is also a symbol of her hope that we as Americans can come together and unify against social issues that

are plagues on our nation such as homelessness, education inequality, and food insecurity to name a few.

Ms. Lee's long resume of working for social equity includes a number of organizations she has been involved with and assisted in establishing as a demonstration of her love for and dedication to humanity. She was a founding member of Citizens Concerned with Human Dignity to assist the economically disadvantaged in Fort Worth; served as a member of the Board of Habitat for Humanity, with which she formerly volunteered, and is currently on the board of the organizations Land Acquisition Board; she also helped to establish the Tarrant County Black Historical & Genealogical Society dedicated to the preservation of the history of the Fort Worth black populace. She has served on the Historic & Cultural Landmarks Commission, AIDS Outreach committee, Evans Avenue Business Association, Good Samaritans, and Riverside Neighborhood Advisory Council as her contribution to her community. She served as Precinct Chair for District 8 for over 30 years, a member of Grandmother's Club, and Ethel Ransom Humanitarian & Cultural Club. And currently, she serves as a Board Member of Unity Unlimited, Inc, with the mission to provide educational activities and resources to people, young and old, foster unity and harmony within the community, the city, the state, the nation and the world regardless of race, culture or denomination. She is also an active member in her church, Baker Chapel AME where she serves as a Missionary, church schoolteacher, assistant teacher and Deaconess.

On June 18, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, signed the Juneteenth holiday into law as an American national holiday. Ms. Opal Lee was invited to the White House to celebrate and participate in the signing of the law as recognition of her tireless advocacy and work to bring recognition to the important date marking the freedom of the final enslaved people who had been kept from their freedom and full participation in our American society. This milestone in her mission to achieve her ultimate goal of freedom and basic human rights is a heartening reminder of why she does the work she has committed herself to and the advocacy that she continues to do. At the age of 95 years old she is still fighting and repeats her personal mantra with every chance she gets, "None of us are free until we're all free".

Her tireless efforts over the decades and her work to advance understanding and respect between individuals of different backgrounds and socioeconomic levels along with her continuing mission to equality is why we members of Congress proudly nominate Ms. Opal Lee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Sincerely,

Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress

John Cornyn  
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

Henry Cuellar  
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D  
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

Al Lawson  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Brenda L. Lawrence  
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

Henry C. “Hank” Johnson  
Member of Congress

Andre Carson  
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred  
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress

Yvette Clarke  
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

Al Green  
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Vincente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress